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SENATE BILL NO. 1392

Offered January 22, 2015

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 15.2-4202 and 15.2-4203 of the Code of Virginia, relating to planning district commissions; composition.*

Patron—Garrett

Referred to Committee on Local Government

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 15.2-4202 and 15.2-4203 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 15.2-4202. Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter:

"Commission" means a planning district commission. Planning district commissions are composed of the duly appointed representatives of the localities which are parties to the charter agreement.

"Planning district" means a contiguous area within the boundaries established by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

"Population," unless a different census is clearly set forth, means the number of inhabitants according to the United States census latest preceding the time at which any provision dependent upon population is being applied, or the time as of which it is being construed, unless there is available an annual estimate of population prepared by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service of the University of Virginia, which has been filed with the Department of Housing and Community Development, in which event the estimate shall govern.

"Regionally significant partner" means a private nonprofit institution, political subdivision of the Commonwealth, federal government entity, or other public or private institution or entity of importance to the region.

§ 15.2-4203. Organization of planning district commission.

A. At any time after the establishment of the geographic boundaries of a planning district, the localities embracing at least 45 percent of the population within the district acting by their governing bodies may organize a planning district commission by written agreement. Any locality not a party to such charter agreement shall continue as a part of the planning district but, until such time as such locality elects to become a part of the planning district commission as hereinafter provided, shall not be represented in the composition of the membership of the planning district commission. Whenever a planning district is created which contains only two counties, the governing body of either county may organize a planning district commission in accordance with the provisions of this chapter if the governing body of the other county does not agree to organize such a planning district commission.

B. The charter agreement shall set forth:

1. The name of the planning district. An entity organized as a planning district commission under this act may employ the name "regional council" or "regional commission" as a substitute for the name "planning district commission."

2. The locality in which its principal office shall be situated.

3. The effective date of the organization of the planning district commission.

4. The composition of the membership of the planning district commission. At least a majority of its members shall be elected officials of the governing bodies of the localities within the district, or members of the General Assembly, with each county, city and town of more than 3,500 population having at least one representative. In any planning district other than planning district number 23, a town of 3,500 or less population may petition the planning district commission to be represented thereon. The planning district commission may, in its discretion, grant representation to such town by a majority vote of the members of the commission. *The planning district commission may, in its discretion, grant representation to one or more regionally significant partners that are not local governments.* Other members shall be qualified voters and residents of the district. In planning districts number 4 and 14, the membership may also include representatives of higher education institutions. Should the charter agreement, as adopted, so provide, an alternate may serve in lieu of one of the elected officials of each of the governing bodies of the participating localities.

5. The term of office of the members, their method of selection or removal and the method for the selection and the term of office of a chairman.

6. The voting rights of members. Such voting rights need not be equal and may be weighed on the basis of the population of the locality represented by the member, the aggregation of the voting rights of members representing one locality, or otherwise.

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59 7. The procedure for amendment, for addition of other localities within the planning district which
60 are not parties to the original charter agreement, and the withdrawal from the charter agreement by
61 localities within the planning district electing to do so.

62 C. The governing body of any locality which is a member of the planning district commission may
63 provide for compensation to be paid by it for its commission members, except for any full-time salaried
64 employees of the locality. The amount of such compensation shall not exceed the amount fixed by the
65 planning district commission.